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UNL, Lincoln, NE

USAID/Mali Awards \$5 M Associate Cooperative Agreement to INTSORMIL for Food Insecurity Mitigation in Mali, West Africa

Dr. John Yohe, Program Director of the “Sorghum, Millet and other Grains Collaborative Research Support Program” (INTSORMIL) announces receipt from the USAID Mission in Mali, West Africa, of a \$5 million grant to expand the activities of the current project “Transfer of Sorghum, Millet Production, Processing and Marketing Technologies in Mali.” Subsistence and resource poor farmers in West Africa are dependent on sorghum and millet as they serve as basic human foods and livestock feed. There continues to be a shortage of sorghum and millet grain in Mali, especially in the north. Mali’s ‘Hungry Season’ has been described as “that period in August and September when this year’s millet is ripening, last year’s has run out and hunger grips most families. At that time there is not enough grain for three meals a day. If one day there is breakfast, there may only be dinner the next.”

The Mali/USAID funded Project is designed to significantly expand the existing project, especially into the northern areas of Mali (Tombouctou etc.) where food insecurity is a severe problem for the small scale farmers who depend on sorghum and millet for their daily diet. The expanded project will rapidly move sorghum and millet production technologies onto farmers’ fields, link farmers’ organizations to food and feed processors and commercialize processing technologies so as to enhance markets. The additional funds will allow INTSORMIL to significantly increase its impact in Mali by (1) expanding to new sites with more concentration in the poorer northern Tombouctou region, (2) upscale the research, (3) upscale the technology transfer component and (4) develop institutional capacity by adding a training component (academic and short term) to the current Cooperative Agreement.

The four year grant consists of four components: 1) **Production - marketing** activities will be led by John Sanders Purdue University Marketing Economist; 2) **Food Processing Technology and Training**, led by Bruce Hamaker, Purdue University Cereal Chemist; 3) **Décrué sorghum** (post water recession sorghum planted at the edges of the Niger River and Lakes after the rainy season has ended) production activities led by Vara Prasad and Scott Staggenborg, Kansas State University Agronomists and 4) **Academic training** to be managed by INTSORMIL. On site management of the Project will be coordinated by Nigerien Botorou Ouendeba, former director of ROCAFREMI, the research network for millet in West and Central Africa.

According to Yohe, “for over 30 years national and international agencies have been producing agricultural technologies for the semiarid regions and then attempting to pass them on to extension agencies. In spite of substantial research progress in the development of new sorghum and pearl millet varieties and associated production practices, diffusion of the improved technologies to the farmers has been slow. This project is designed to solve this constraint by moving sorghum and millet production technologies onto farmers’ fields and linking the farmers’ organizations to food and feed processors.”



Dr. John Sanders, Purdue University Marketing Economist discussing the importance of networking between millet producers (right) and food processors (left) in a Project collaborator's millet field in Tingoni village, Mali.